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accessible to customers by telephone for creation of a merchandise order; and
interactively assembling a customer order for fulfillment, including the steps of:
requesting from a customer, by spoken word generated by said central station, a product identification of a product item and a quantity of the product item to be added to the merchandise order;
receiving a requested product identification and a requested product quantity from a customer, said requested product identification and requested product quantity being received by said central station in at least one form of communication selected from the group of communication forms including spoken words and DTMF-encoded signals; and
confirming, by spoken word generated by said central station, the identity and quantity of the product item to be included in the merchandise order.

41. (Pending) The method of claim 40 wherein said confirming step includes reciting to the customer a product description and a product price of the product item corresponding to the product identification.

42. (Pending) The method of claim 40 additionally comprising determining if the customer has an unfulfilled merchandise order by checking an unfulfilled merchandise orders database.

43. (Pending) The method of claim 42 additionally comprising, if an unfulfilled merchandise order is present on said unfulfilled merchandise orders database, inquiring whether the

customer desires a listing of the product items in the unfulfilled merchandise order, and if a positive response is received from the customer, reciting a listing of product items of the unfulfilled merchandise order.

44. (Pending) The method of claim 43 additionally comprising transmitting to the customer a merchandise order transfer characteristic of the unfulfilled merchandise order to the customer.

45. (Pending) The method of claim 43 additionally comprising inquiring whether the unfulfilled merchandise order is to be modified.

46. (Pending) The method of claim 40 wherein said assembling step comprises comparing the requested product quantity of a product item in a merchandise order to a predetermined limit quantity established for said product item and, if the requested quantity exceeds said predetermined limit quantity, reciting the requested product quantity of the product item to the customer and requesting confirmation from the customer of the requested product quantity of the product item.

47. (Pending) The method of claim 40 additionally comprising selecting the merchandise order transfer characteristics for effecting the transfer to the customer of the product items of the merchandise order, including choosing between the options of delivery of the product items to the customer and pickup of the product items by the customer, and picking the date and time of the transfer of the merchandise order.

48. (Pending) The method of claim 40 additionally comprising inquiring whether the customer wishes to hear a

recitation of product items on which there is a special offer, and if a response from the customer is positive, reciting a listing of any special offer product items.

49. (Pending) The method of claim 40 wherein said system further comprises a store station linked to said central station for receiving said merchandise order from said central station, said store station including a portable station movable by a user about a product storage space, and additionally comprising the step of transmitting a record of the merchandise order to a store station for requesting payment for the merchandise order.

50. (Pending) The method of claim 40 wherein said assembling step includes determining whether the product identification entered by the customer is a valid product identification.

Please add the following claims:

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C2
~~51. (Added) A method of merchandise ordering and order fulfillment, said method comprising:
providing an order processing system comprising a central station interfaced to a telephone communication network so as be accessible to customers by telephone for creation of a merchandise order; and
assembling a customer order for fulfillment, including the steps of:
requesting from a customer a product identification of a product item and a quantity of the product item to be added to the merchandise order;
receiving a requested product identification and a requested product quantity from a customer; and
confirming the identity and quantity of the product item to be~~

Sub D⁵7

included in the merchandise order;
determining if the customer has an unfulfilled merchandise order by
checking an unfulfilled merchandise orders database; and
if an unfulfilled merchandise order is present on said unfulfilled
merchandise orders database, inquiring whether the customer
desires a listing of the product items in the unfulfilled
merchandise order, and if a positive response is received from
the customer, reciting a listing of product items of the
unfulfilled merchandise order.

52. (Added) The method of claim 51 additionally comprising
transmitting to the customer a merchandise order transfer
characteristic of the unfulfilled merchandise order to the customer.

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53. (Added) The method of claim 51 additionally comprising
inquiring whether the unfulfilled merchandise order is to be
modified.

Sub D⁶7

54. (Added) A method of merchandise ordering and order
fulfillment, said method comprising:
providing an order processing system comprising a central station
interfaced to a telephone communication network so as be
accessible to customers by telephone for creation of a
merchandise order; and
assembling a customer order for fulfillment, including the steps of:
requesting from a customer a product identification of a
product item and a quantity of the product item to be
added to the merchandise order;
receiving a requested product identification and a requested
product quantity from a customer;
confirming the identity and quantity of the product item to be
included in the merchandise order; and

Sub D⁶ 7

comparing the requested product quantity of a product item in a merchandise order to a predetermined limit quantity established for said product item and, if the requested quantity exceeds said predetermined limit quantity, reciting the requested product quantity of the product item to the customer and requesting confirmation from the customer of the requested product quantity of the product item.

55. (Added) A method of merchandise ordering and order fulfillment, said method comprising:
providing an order processing system comprising a central station interfaced to a telephone communication network so as be accessible to customers by telephone for creation of a merchandise order; and
assembling a customer order for fulfillment, including the steps of:
requesting from a customer a product identification of a product item and a quantity of the product item to be added to the merchandise order;
receiving a requested product identification and a requested product quantity from a customer; and
confirming the identity and quantity of the product item to be included in the merchandise order;
selecting the merchandise order transfer characteristics for effecting the transfer to the customer of the product items of the merchandise order, including choosing between the options of delivery of the product items to the customer and pickup of the product items by the customer, and picking the date and time of the transfer of the merchandise order.

56. (Added) A method of merchandise ordering and order fulfillment, said method comprising:

Sub D⁶ 7

providing an order processing system comprising a central station interfaced to a telephone communication network so as be accessible to customers by telephone for creation of a merchandise order;

assembling a customer order for fulfillment, including the steps of:

requesting from a customer a product identification of a product item and a quantity of the product item to be added to the merchandise order;

receiving a requested product identification and a requested product quantity from a customer;

confirming the identity and quantity of the product item to be included in the merchandise order; and

inquiring whether the customer wishes to hear a recitation of product items on which there is a special offer, and if a response from the customer is positive, reciting a listing of any special offer product items.

57. (Added) A method of merchandise ordering and order fulfillment, said method comprising:

providing an order processing system comprising a central station interfaced to a telephone communication network so as be accessible to customers by telephone for creation of a merchandise order, said order processing system including a store station linked to said central station for receiving said merchandise order from said central station, said store station including a portable station movable by a user about a product storage space;

assembling a customer order for fulfillment, including the steps of:

requesting from a customer a product identification of a product item and a quantity of the product item to be added to the merchandise order;